

Special Libraries Association



**THE WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON
LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES
July 9-13, 1991**

- **Role of the Special Library**
- **SLA: In Summary**
- **Government Relations Platform**

The Special Libraries Association

Welcomes You To

The White House Conference on Library and Information Services

July 1991

On behalf of the Special Libraries Association (SLA) and our 13,000 members worldwide, we would like to welcome you to the second White House Conference on Library and Information Services. We are certain you will utilize this opportunity to actively participate in the development of recommendations to influence areas of library-related public policies.

While our involvement as special librarians and information professionals is somewhat different than other members of the library community, there are also many similarities consistent throughout the various activities. SLA's Board of Directors has gone on record on a number of occasions in support of the White House Conference.

SLA staff are actively participating in the Conference and will be available throughout the week. We would like to offer our services and resources to you, so please feel free to call (202/234-4700) or stop by SLA headquarters at 1700 Eighteenth Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009.

With a great deal of anticipation and excitement, we look forward to working with you during this White House Conference.



Guy St. Clair
President
Delegate-At-Large



David R. Bender, Ph.D.
Executive Director
Official Observer

The Role of the Special Library in the Information Age

The special library represents a resource for specialized information on the local, state, and national level. Special librarians and information professionals serve business, media, finance, research, science, government, museums, trade associations, research institutions, and nonprofit organizations. The one common thread in these libraries and information centers is that all have collected and organized specialized information in specific subject areas or in the support of specific missions in order to meet the information needs of their respective clienteles.

While essentially established to assist the users within their own institutions, the purpose and mission of these libraries and information centers have expanded as the environment in which they serve has grown and advanced in the Information Age. The special library/information center now provides a wide range of information services to a not so limited clientele (particularly in government libraries), and plays a major role in the advancement of information policy and information products and services which foster and promote these policies.

Delegates to the national meeting of WHCLIS must understand and appreciate the value and role of special libraries/information centers and the

professionals who service these collections. The resources of special libraries are vital to the development of this nation technically, scientifically, and socially by virtue of the advancements made by the organizations and institutions within which they serve. These special library collections are there for others to use; therefore, special libraries can have a role in meeting the information needs of the community at large.

No national library and information services program, nor national information network (such as the proposed National Research and Education Network), should be planned or implemented without the assistance and expertise of the special librarian/information professional.

National information policies and strategies must incorporate the wealth of specialized information which could be made available to even larger segments of our citizenry. General public libraries and citizens need to be cognizant of the fact that these collections can help meet the needs of a variety of users. Special librarians want to play a part in providing local, state, and national information services and indeed, special libraries must be an integral part of the total information picture at this White House Conference.

SLA Issues At WHCLIS

SLA has gone on record as supporting the concepts and goals of a second White House Conference. The following are some of the issues which address the needs of SLA members:

- ways the library community can and should work with the private sector in the dissemination of government information;
- privatization/contracting-out;
- the growing role of librarians/information specialists in the globalization of information;
- the important role played by corporate, federal, and other special libraries and information centers;
- strengthening public-private partnerships as federal funding for library-related initiatives dwindles;
- maintaining open access to government information to guarantee a democratic and economically sound society;
- protecting the confidentiality of library records maintained in public institutions;
- preservation of books and other publications regardless of format;
- marketing the profession and other resources offered by all librarians and information specialists;
- understanding and use of new and emerging technologies by the library/information profession as well as the end-user;
- copyright and intellectual property; and
- national information policies.

SLA: In Summary

THE SPECIAL LIBRARIES ASSOCIATION (SLA) is an international professional organization of more than 13,000 librarians, information managers, and brokers serving organizations that use or produce specialized information. SLA was founded in 1909.

- **MISSION:** To advance the leadership role of special librarians in putting knowledge to work in the information society.
- 13,000 members worldwide.
- 55 Chapters in the United States, Canada, and Europe.
- 28 Divisions representing subject interests or specializations.
- **SERVICES:** SLA's many services encourage the growth and advancement of information professionals. Among the programs and services are:
 - Professional Development programs for professionals in entry level, middle management, and executive positions
 - Regional Continuing Education programs
 - Winter Education Conference
 - Resume Referral Service
 - Non-Serial Publications including specialized bibliographies, indexes, guides, directories, and textbooks on various aspects of special librarianship
 - *SpecialList*, a monthly newsletter covering Association news
 - *Special Libraries*, a quarterly journal featuring articles on the administration and operation of special libraries and information centers, information technology, and case studies
 - Annual Conference and Exhibits
 - Information Resources Center, a special library focusing on the operation and management of special libraries, providing telephone and onsite reference
 - Active Government Relations and Public Relations programs
 - Annual Scholarships and Special Programs Fund Grants
 - Comprehensive Research program
- **LEADERSHIP:** SLA is governed by a 14-member Board of Directors elected by the membership. Chapter and Division Cabinet leaders represent the unique needs of Chapters and Divisions on the Board.

What is a Special Library?

A special library is a collection of materials dealing with a specific subject or particular body of knowledge. The special library acquires, organizes, maintains, and disseminates information relevant to the sponsoring organization, as well as develops information services which fulfill the information needs of that organization. Perhaps the best way to understand the special library is to review those organizations which sponsor them. They include:

- advertising and public relations firms
- banking and financial institutions
- chemical and related industries
- food and agricultural businesses
- news organizations and electronic media
- publishing houses
- government agencies
- colleges and universities
- museums and art institutions
- trade and professional associations
- petroleum and energy-related organizations
- hospital and medical facilities
- nonprofit and philanthropic organizations
- law firms
- transportation industries

What is a Special Librarian?

A special librarian is a professional trained in library/information science who has combined that knowledge with another discipline. Many hold a master of library science—MLS—as well as a bachelor's, master's, or doctoral degree. For example, special librarians working in business and finance may hold an MBA. Law librarians frequently have law degrees. Art librarians have combined library education with degrees in the fine arts.

Membership Characteristics 1997 Membership Survey

- 57 percent of SLA members are between the ages of 31 and 45
- 87 percent of SLA members have a master's degree in library science
- 71 percent have a bachelor's degree in a subject area and 20 percent have a master's degree in a subject area
- SLA's members are found in:
 - corporate libraries—52 percent
 - academic libraries—17 percent
 - nonprofits—13 percent
 - government—14 percent

SLA Chapters

Date of Establishment in Parentheses

Alabama (1953)
Arizona (1978)
Baltimore (1930)
Boston (1910)
Central Ohio (1963)
Central Pennsylvania (1979)
Cincinnati (1927)
Cleveland (1927)
Connecticut Valley (1934)
Eastern Canada (1932)
European (1972)
Fairfield County (1982)
Florida (1969)
Georgia (1952)
Hawaiian-Pacific (1972)
Heart of America (1948)
Hudson Valley (1973)
Illinois (1925)

Indiana (1941)
Kentucky (1972)
Long Island (1972)
Louisiana (1946)
Michigan (1929)
Mid-Missouri (1972)
Mid-South (1975)
Minnesota (1943)
New Jersey (1935)
New York (1915)
North Carolina (1956)
Oklahoma (1956)
Omaha Area (1980)
Oregon (1973)
Pacific Northwest (1945)
Philadelphia (1919)
Pittsburgh (1922)
Princeton-Trenton (1967)
Rhode Island (1977)

Rio Grande (1956)
Rocky Mountain (1951)
St. Louis Metropolitan Area (1941)
San Andreas (1980)
San Diego (1960)
San Francisco Bay Region (1924)
Sierra Nevada (1975)
South Carolina (1985)
Southern Appalachian (1953)
Southern California (1927)
Texas (1949)
Toronto (1940)
Upstate New York (1945)
Virginia (1966)
Washington, D.C. (1940)
Western Canada (1980)
Western Michigan (1980)
Wisconsin (1931)

SLA Divisions

Date of Establishment in Parentheses

Advertising & Marketing (1942)
Aerospace (1963)
Biological Sciences (1935)
Business & Finance (1925)
Chemistry (1933)
Education (1974)
Engineering (1941)
Environment and Resource
Management (1989)
Food, Agriculture & Nutrition
(1972)
Geography & Map (1941)

Information Technology (1951)
Insurance & Employee
Benefits (1922)
Library Management (1976)
Metals/Materials (1949)
Military Librarians (1953)
Museums, Arts &
Humanities (1929)
News (1924)
Nuclear Science (1963)
Petroleum & Energy
Resources (1933)

Pharmaceutical (1947)
Physics-Astronomy-
Mathematics (1972)
Public Utilities (1962)
Publishing (1947)
Science-Technology (1924)
Social Science (1923)
Solo Librarians (1991)
Telecommunications (1977)
Transportation (1943)

SLA Student Groups

Atlantic University
Catholic University of America
Columbia University
Drexel University
Emporia State University
Florida State University
Indiana University
Long Island University/
C. W. Post Campus
Louisiana State University
McGill University
North Carolina Central University
North Texas State University
Rutgers University
St. John's University

San Jose State University
San Jose State University at
California State University/Fullerton
Simmons College
Southern Connecticut State University
State University of New York/Albany
Syracuse University
Texas Women's University
University of Alabama
University of Arizona
University of California/Berkeley
University of California/Los Angeles
University of Hawaii
University of Illinois/Urbana-Champaign

University of Iowa
University of Kentucky
University of Michigan
University of Missouri/Columbia
University of North Carolina/Chapel Hill
University of North Carolina/Greensboro
University of Pittsburgh
University of South Carolina
University of South Florida
University of Southern Mississippi
University of Tennessee/Knoxville
University of Texas/Austin
University of Toronto
University of Wisconsin/Madison
Wayne State University

SLA Government Relations

SLA's Government Relations Program seeks to inform and educate government officials in the U.S. Congress, Canadian Parliament, and regulatory agencies on those issues pertinent to the special libraries community. In general, issues addressed by the Association deal specifically with information, the provision of information, and the rights of all to access public information.

Government Relations Network

The Association's Government Relations Program is managed by the Director of Government Relations. A "network" of SLA Chapter and Division members throughout the U.S. and Canada assist in channeling information to SLA headquarters, share information with members of the network, and receive updates from SLA on those issues which impact the profession or those initiatives which require input from the membership.

The Association's Government Relations Committee, a standing committee of the Board of Directors, monitors governmental activities, recommends positions and actions to the Board, and disseminates information to the Board and membership.

SLA, through its Government Relations Program, is an active proponent of special librarians. Association members and staff frequently can be found giving testimony and statements on regulations and legislation crucial to the special libraries profession. SLA is represented at hearings and in meetings which will direct the course of government action regarding information. The Association takes an active role in recommending legislation and activities which assist information professionals.

Government Relations Activities

The SLA Board of Directors approved a "Government Relations Policy Statement" in 1980. The nine sections of the statement are based on the objectives of the Association and its commitment to the improvement and growth of library and information services. Guiding the yearly activities of the program is the Association's Government Relations Platform which is revised annually and adopted by the Board. The platform enumerates specific governmental activities to be monitored and defines the Association's posture on information issues by supporting legislation which advances library and information services; fosters use of new technology; facilitates international exchange of information; protects intellectual freedom and confidentiality of library records; ensures that government information is easily accessible; and monitors copyright legislation.

SLA has been active in the development of its government relations program. In recent years, the level of activity has increased to reflect the changing needs of the special library community. Among the issues of concern to SLA are:

- White House Conference on Library and Information Services
- National Research and Education Network
- Funding for Library Programs
- Access to Government Information
- Government Use of New Technologies
- National and International Information Policies
- Electronic Distribution of Government Information to Depository Libraries
- Copyright: Canada and U.S.
- Changes in Standards for Federal Librarians
- Privatization and Contracting-Out

SLA Government Relations Platform

1. Encourage the enactment of legislation which would advance library and information services in the public sectors.
2. Encourage the enactment of legislation which would foster the uses of new information technologies.
3. Encourage the enactment of postal legislation which would allow for the mailing of information in an efficient and cost-effective manner.
4. Encourage the enactment of legislation which would foster international exchange of information, regardless of its format.
5. Encourage the enactment of legislation which would serve to protect an individual's intellectual freedom by guaranteeing the confidentiality of library records maintained in public institutions.
6. Monitor various government activities/regulations to ensure that the library and information services' mission of each governmental agency is not adversely affected.
7. Monitor legislative and executive branch activities to ensure that government documents and information are easily accessible and readily available to the special library community.
8. Monitor library and information personnel practices, including standards and wage comparability, which would impact the development and delivery of library and information services.
9. Monitor developments in telecommunications that affect the transmission of data used in education, research, and the provision of library/information services.
10. Monitor copyright legislation ensuring that libraries in the public and private sectors receive equitable treatment.
11. Monitor funding for library and library-related programs.
12. Monitor government activities to ensure that in both Canada and the United States freedom of expression is not stifled; that government censorship in any form is opposed; and that in the United States, guarantees to First Amendment rights are preserved.

Interassociation Cooperation

SLA's Government Relations Program often works in conjunction with the efforts of other library/information associations. SLA is an active member of the Coalition on Government Information, a network of 50 organizations concerned about the growing "tendency for less access to government information."

SLA cosponsors Library Legislative Day with the American Library Association and the District of Columbia Library Association. Legislative Day, held annually during National Library Week, is the one day during which librarians and information professionals from across the U.S. travel to Capitol Hill to educate members of Congress on the specific needs of the nation's libraries.

Communicating the success of the program is done through SLA's publications, *SpecialList* and *Special Libraries*, as well as other information-related journals and newsletters.

The Government Relations Committee sponsors a meeting and legislative update during SLA's Annual Conference. This is an opportunity for all members and conference participants to learn about or become involved in the Association's Government Relations Program and Network.

The objective of SLA's Government Relations Program is to help government officials understand the issues before them and the impact their actions have on the library and information community. The growing involvement of the government in various aspects of information demonstrates the vital need for SLA's Government Relations Program.



Special Libraries Association

1700 Eighteenth Street, N.W.

Washington, D.C. 20009-2508

(TEL) 202/234-4700

(FAX) 202/265-9317